

## **2021 JCRC SB 596 Election Law- Early Voting Center**

Uploaded by: Bagwell, Ashlie

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 596 –  
*Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Hours of Operation*  
Education, Health, and Environmental Committee  
February 18, 2021**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

Voting rights are the cornerstone of our democracy. The JCRC recognizes the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as one of the most important and most effective pieces of civil rights legislation in our Nation's history. The agency has a long tradition of expanding voter access and combatting voter suppression.

Given these principles, the JCRC strongly supports SB 596 to ensure that early voting centers will be open from 8am to 8pm every year and not just during presidential elections. For these reasons, we ask the committee to support SB 596.

# **SB0596-FAV-DTMG-2-18-21.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bartlett, Olivia

Position: FAV



**Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team**

**Committee:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Testimony on:** SB0596 - Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Hours of Operation

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 18, 2021

**Bill Contact:** Senator Washington

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grassroots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that support and uplift all members of its communities. DTMG strongly supports SB0596 because it will expand opportunities for voting, allowing for stronger participation and representation in our government.

SB0596 will increase poll hours during early voting to 8:00 am to 8:00 pm daily in all elections, including primary elections, instead of 10 am to 8 pm during primary elections and non-presidential elections. Early voting hours will therefore be standardized across the state for all elections and match the poll hours on Election Day, thereby reducing confusion about voting hours and expanding opportunities for everyone to vote.

Primary elections and state and local government elections are every bit as important for Maryland residents as presidential elections, and we must do all we can to make sure as many citizens as possible have access to voting in these elections.

Two hour – or more - waits in line were not uncommon in recent non-presidential elections. The extra two hours per day of early voting just makes sense and will be very helpful in reducing the unacceptably long lines encountered during early voting at many locations.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0596 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett  
Co-Lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team  
oliviabartlett@verizon.net  
240-751-5599

# **GMOM\_SB596test\_021821.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cooper, Charlie

Position: FAV



Get Money Out – Maryland

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**STATEMENT TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 596 – EARLY VOTING CENTERS - HOURS OF  
OPERATION**

**February 18, 2021**

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization that was established 8 years ago. We work toward the goal that all citizens should have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance. Despite having no outside source of funding, we have assisted over 9,000 Marylanders to engage with members of the General Assembly.

We think that government should remove barriers wherever possible for citizens who want to and are eligible to vote. We have observed during our petitioning efforts that voters arrive at early voting centers before the 10:00 am opening, and some of them leave because they have to go to work. Therefore, we think that opening the centers at 8:00 am for non-presidential elections removes one more barrier to people voting and avoids a situation where citizens arrive at a voting center and are disappointed. We urge a favorable report on SB.

# **sb0596\_Represent\_Maryland\_Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Demnowicz, Cristi

Position: FAV



**BILL:** SB0596

**BILL TITLE:** Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Hours of Operation

**BILL SPONSOR:** Senator Washington

**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

**COMMITTEE:** EHEA

**HEARING DATE:** 2.18.2021

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0596**

Universal access to the ballot box is an essential component of a functioning democracy, and thus a priority for our grassroots group Represent Maryland. We also believe that “all politics are local”, and this means elections during non-presidential years are just as vital as presidential elections. Unfortunately, state law does not currently reflect this principle, as voting hours of operation at early voting centers currently differ between presidential (8 am-8 pm) and non-presidential (10 am-8 pm) years.

SB0596 rectifies this discrepancy by making early voting hours uniform across elections. Moreover, it expands voting hours by two hours, making these often lesser publicized elections more accessible to people who have to work longer hours or multiple jobs and may otherwise be unable to exercise their right to vote.

Represent Maryland believes that REAL democracy is only possible when working people have significant input, thus we strongly support legislation that 1) expands access to the franchise and 2) potentially increases turnout in local elections. We believe that SB0596 meets these criteria, and thus, ask that you find this bill favorable.

Sincerely,  
Cristi Demnowicz, Chair  
Represent Maryland  
Maryland Voter-LD7

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Represent Maryland is a grassroots anti-corruption group of citizen advocates that #FightForDemocracy in Maryland. Our democracy solutions include: Public Election Funds, Independent Redistricting, Special Elections, Ranked Choice Voting, Increased Ethics and Transparency, and Increased Voter Participation. Learn more about our work at [www.RepresentMaryland.org](http://www.RepresentMaryland.org)

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miler, Treasurer



# **Legislative Testimony 596.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elliott, Richard DeShay

Position: FAV

Legislative Testimony:  
SB596

I strongly support Senator Mary Washington's SB596 to expand the hours that Early Voting  
sights can be open, expanding access to the ballot for working Marylanders.



By Authority: Rich Elliott For Maryland Keanuu Smith-Brown, Campaign Chair Christian Hillian, Treasurer

# **SB 596 testimony Feb 2021 pdf.pdf**

Uploaded by: garland, lynn

Position: FAV

**Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Hours of Operation**

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Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

I support this bill to open early-voting-centers at 8:00 am for all elections, not just for presidential general elections. In the past, (in normal years) Maryland's longest lines on election day have been first thing in the morning. Presumably, many people want to vote before going to work. Opening early-voting-centers earlier would help alleviate these Election Day lines. Note that extending early voting hours is a more cost effective way for expanding capacity than adding more machines.

Consider voters as customers of election administration. The customers have "voted with their feet" that they prefer to cast their ballots early in the morning. Please accommodate the voters' preferences and open early-voting-center polling places by 8:00 am for all elections.

Lynn Garland  
Independent Advisor on Voting Systems Security and Accuracy  
Bethesda, Maryland

## **MLW Written Testimony SB596- Early Voting Centers.**

Uploaded by: griffin, christine

Position: FAV

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D  
Legislative District 43  
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

*Chair*  
Joint Committee on Ending  
Homelessness

*Chair*  
Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

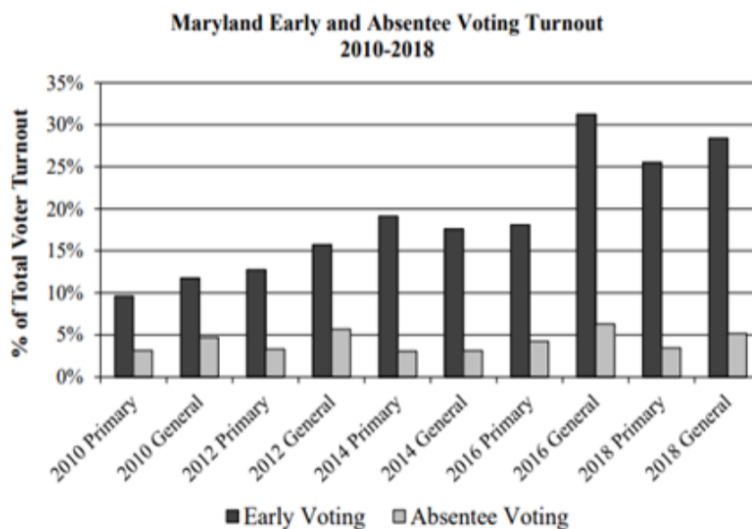
**SUPPORT – SB 596**  
**Election Law - Early Voting Centers –**  
**Hours of Operation**  
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
February 18, 2021  
Testimony of Senator Mary Washington

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to vote favorably on Senate Bill 596, which will require Maryland Early Voting Centers to open at 8:00am during non-general elections.

Currently, Early Voting Centers open at 8:00am during presidential general elections, but cannot open earlier than 10:00am for any other election. The 10:00am start time presents a problem for many voters, particularly those who want to vote on their way to work.

As you can see in the chart below, voter turnout for primary elections has risen dramatically in Maryland since 2010. By opening Early Voting Centers two hours earlier for these elections, we will build on our recent efforts to expand voter access and decrease wait times to vote.



This bill is a simple fix that will permanently increase the opportunity for all Marylanders to participate in our democracy.

For these reasons, I ask you for a favorable report on SB 596.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Senator Mary Washington, District 43, Baltimore City

# **SB0569\_Maryland PIRG\_FAV\_Rishi Shah.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shah, Rishi

Position: FAV



# Maryland PIRG

**Rishi Shah, Maryland PIRG Associate**

**Testimony for SB0569**

**Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, Thursday, February 18, 2021**

**Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Hours of Operation**

**Position: Favorable**

*Maryland PIRG is a state based, non-partisan, citizen-funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state and a student funded, student directed chapter at the University of Maryland College Park. For forty five years we've stood up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in our democratic society. That includes a long history of working to help people register and vote.*

We support SB569 requiring early voting centers to be open between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. for early voting days in all elections. Currently, early voting centers are only required to be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for non-presidential general elections and primary elections, and from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for presidential general elections. The [House passed the cross-file bill to SB596 by a vote of 119-11](#), and we hope the Senate will move quickly to do the same.

SB569 would provide flexibility to voters in presidential primaries and midterm elections. Extending the availability of early voting by two hours in the morning would enable voters to more easily incorporate voting into their day. This would be especially helpful for Marylanders who face demanding work schedules or family obligations—voters for whom the current 10 a.m. opening time is inconvenient or impractical.

The 2020 election saw [long lines at many early voting centers](#). While the dramatic increase in early voting in 2020 was largely due to COVID-19, there have often been long lines at early voting sites because there are far fewer early voting sites than Election Day precinct sites. In the 2018 midterm, [voters faced lines of up to 90 minutes long](#). SB569 would help to reduce these lines, thus addressing a persistent and preventable problem in Maryland's early voting system.

SB569 represents a common-sense step towards expanding the accessibility of early voting in Maryland. The 2020 general election notwithstanding, [Maryland has seen a consistent increase in early in-person voting since 2010](#). Marylanders are increasingly turning to early voting as an alternative to voting on Election Day itself. SB569 responds to this demonstrated state-wide demand for improved access to early voting.

We respectfully request a favorable report.

# **SB0596- Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Hour**

Uploaded by: White, Kadi-Ann

Position: FAV

**February 18, 2021**

**Testimony on SB0596**  
**Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Hours of Operation**  
**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 206, which would establish an earlier opening time for early voting centers during gubernatorial general elections, providing Marylanders maximum opportunity to participate in the democratic process and helping to increase turnout during midterm elections.

Currently, early voting centers open at 8am during presidential general elections, but only open at 10am during gubernatorial general elections providing less time for voters to cast a ballot in races that are just as important. Early voting was established to drive participation and make voting more convenient. While the program has been a success and has seen a surge in the number of Marylanders voting early, we are leaving those with tight work schedules and family obligations behind.

In a Center for American Progress report, they found that 14% of registered voters cited conflicting schedules as their reason for not voting, 2% cited inconvenient hours. Because of this, most states require polls to be open for at least 12 hours, ensuring those with workdays that start especially early and end late in the evening who are unable to take time away from work are able to participate. A study of early voting in 2008 in 117 of 159 Georgia counties concluded that “[i]ncreasing the hours of operation for early voting sites... appears to be the most cost-effective measure for boosting turnout.” Research from the Brennan Center for Justice found that in states with some of the highest rates of early voting, like New Mexico, Tennessee, and Texas, election officials chose to offer early voting for significantly more hours than the statutory minimum. In Bernalillo, New Mexico, the county provides 12 hours of early voting for all general elections. And in Travis County, Texas, one early voting “mega center” is open until 9:00 p.m., an additional two hours beyond the statutorily required 12-hour day. This 12-hour standard should be applied during early voting in all Maryland general elections.

During the 2018 gubernatorial general election, more people voted than ever before with early voting more than doubling compared to turnout in 2014. Even with the higher than usual turnout, midterm turnout is still generally lower than presidential years. Increasing the amount of time polls are open during early voting will build on the success of the program, helping to improve participation throughout the state during midterm elections.

We need to do everything we can to remove barriers to exercising the right to vote. HB 206 would help to do that by ensuring all voters are provided with ample time to vote early during gubernatorial general elections.

We urge a favorable report.

# **SB596 Hours of Early Voting Info.pdf**

Uploaded by: Berry, Katherine

Position: INFO



## **Maryland Association of Election Officials**

**Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland**

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: SB596 Information**

Senator Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) would like to provide information regarding SB596 – Election Law – Early Voting Center Hours of Operation.

The 2020 Presidential General Election required 9 days of staff managing in-person voting from 7:00 AM until 8:00 PM each day for the voters. In order to accomplish this task, some LBEs had staff arriving at their offices before 6:00 AM and those same staff closing early voting centers and preparing for the next day which took anywhere from 2-4 hours after the polls were closed. Due to the lines, some locations did not leave until nearly midnight. As a result of these factors, additional compensation was required for the employees who had to manage early voting center, for those required to be at the LBE office during early voting hours and there was an ongoing risk of fatigue and errors being made due to lack of rest. LBEs may need to explore the need for more permanent staff so that they may be rotated out instead of the requirement to rely on the same key staff each day.

We want you to know that we fully support the need to have full access to the ballot boxes, but by having no excuse mail-in voting, 8 days of early voting including Saturday, Sunday and some holidays (if applicable), and election day, there are a multitude of opportunities available.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please give me a call at 410-386-2958, or via e-mail at [Katherine.berry@maryland.gov](mailto:Katherine.berry@maryland.gov).

[www.maeo.net](http://www.maeo.net)